White Feather

DAVID CORY

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Soon all the little rabbits began their moonlight dance.
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WHITE FEATHER

By
DAVID CORY

Little Indian Series

Volume Two

Illustrated by
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To
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FOREWORD

THE INDIAN BOY

By

DR. JOSEPH KOSSUTH DIXON

Leader of the Rodman Wanamaker Historical Expeditions to the North American Indian

There is a secure immortality and a depth of intuition in the utterance of Wordsworth, the peer of nature's poets, when from his pastoral reed he strikes the notes:

"The child is father of the man."

Nothing could be more insistently and persistently true of the Indian child—the girl to be the mother of warriors, the boy to become a hero and the father of future "braves."

It goes back, all of it, to a heredity born of three vital and vitalizing forces. The Indian holds with steadfastness and devotion to his many and weird ceremonies, but these all lead him back to the supreme, piloting force of his life, his unfailing faith in the Great Mystery.

The altar stairs to the spirit world are hills, buttressed by granite; trees that talk with the winds—whispers from the spirit world; the thunder of the waterfall—the voice of the Great Mystery; stars—the footprints of warriors treading the highways of the Happy Hunting Ground. In all of these he sees God.

Falling into communion with this happy philosophy of life, the glory of Indian motherhood crosses our

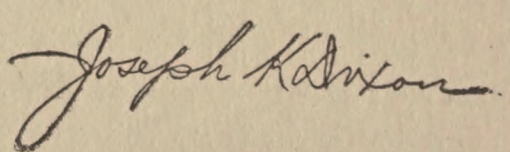
path—and there are few things more beautiful. When the day of expectation dawns upon her, she seeks the solitude of all the majesty in which from childhood she has seen the footprints of God—revels, communes, rehearses to herself the heroism of the greatest hero of her tribe, and all that the impress of it may be felt upon the master man, the miracle of whose life has been entrusted to her to work out.

For the first two full years of his life, a spiritual hand guides his steps. There, in struggle and patience and self-denial, he must learn all of nature's glad story.

His grandparents then take him into their school. He learns to ride before he can walk; he is taught the use of the bow and arrow, which means hitting the mark, keenness of vision, a steady aim, precision, so that when the crisis comes he is ready—an ample reason for the brave, effective and self-reliant conduct of the Indian soldier on the fields of France in the World War.

Deep breathing in the open air, giving full lung power; self-denial, giving strength of limb and endurance in the race; fellowship with all of nature's winsome and wild moods; a discerning will power; a steadfast reliance upon the guiding hand of the Great Spirit, empower the Indian boy to stand on all the high hills of history and challenge any militant force that may confront him.

The sphere is complete; Boy: Mother: God.



WHITE FEATHER

CHAPTER I

LITTLE INDIAN AND TASNAHECA

"I HAVE a task for you," said the Small Dog, standing before Little Indian's tepee. "And when you have told your red-skinned brothers of it and they have done their part you may lead them to your father's camp, for by that time they will have sufficient food for the journey."

"I am ready to follow you," replied Little Indian.

"Then come with me," said the Small Dog. Toward the wood he led the way, where the oaks, hazels, walnuts and beeches made a pleasant

shade. On reaching a big walnut tree the Small Dog stopped and said:

"Rest awhile, O Little Indian, for I expect my friend, Tasnaheca, the Chipmunk, to arrive shortly."

It was very cool and pleasant, and the Small Dog was a good companion, so that Little Indian did not feel restless. He had been taught the art of patience, as are all Indian boys. He could lie for hours with his ear to the ground, listening for the hoof-beats of the buffalo on the broad prairie. It was an easy matter now, beneath the shade, while Tate Wiyohpeyata, the West Wind, rustled the leaves. Now and again a nut dropped to the ground, shaken off by West Wind's nimble fingers.

"Our waiting is over," said the Small Dog, "for here comes Tasnaheca." The Chipmunk paused to pick

up the nuts. He stuffed them into his cheek-pouches until they could hold no more. As he finished stuffing in the last nut the Small Dog said to him: "Listen, O industrious Tasnaheca! My red-skinned friend, Little Indian, would supply his brothers who are camped nearby with food so that they may have sufficient to last them on their journey to his father's camp."

Tasnaheca, the Chipmunk, turned his eyes on Little Indian. Then he carefully took out the nuts from his cheek-pouches so that he might reply distinctly. He piled them carefully in one spot and then advanced a few steps.

Before he commenced to speak Zica, the Red Squirrel, ran out on a branch overhead and commenced to chatter and scold. "You cannot take our nuts," he cried.

Little Indian looked up at him.

Many times he had heard about Zica. It was this Red Squirrel, so his old grandmother had told him, who first with his tattling tongue had set Malsum, the Wicked Wolf, against his brother, Glooscap the Good.

"Pay no heed to Zica," said the Small Dog. "We are waiting for your answer, O industrious Tasnaheca."

"Follow me, my friends," replied the Chipmunk, and he led them to his home. "You may uncover my lodge," said Tasnaheca.

Little Indian took a sharp stick and commenced digging. Presently he came to a long, winding passageway leading to a little storehouse full of nuts. "You are welcome to my supplies," said the Chipmunk. "I have yet time to fill another before the Winter King comes on his snowflake horses."

CHAPTER II

LITTLE INDIAN GOES FISHING

THE next morning when the east was tinged with the colors of the rainbow, for the Great Sun was just rising from his purple couch and Tate Wiyohiyanpa, the East Wind, was scattering the darkness with his silver arrows, the tepee flap was slowly drawn aside and Little Indian beheld the form of the Small Dog standing out against the gray of the morning.

"Heed me well, O Little Indian," he said. "Today you must lead the tribe to your father's camp. But I fear there is yet scarce food enough for the journey. Come with me."

Slinging his bow and quiver of arrows over his shoulder, the little In-

dian boy followed his faithful friend. For some distance they traveled in silence. As they neared a river the Small Dog said: "Fish in plenty swim in yonder bright waters. I would have you catch a bountiful supply. Icapsinsincadan, the Swallow, who builds her lodge from the mud of the river bank, tells me there will be fish in abundance today in the bright waters of this river."

"But I have no net," replied Little Indian. "Only my bow and arrows have I with me."

"True," answered the Small Dog, "but have patience, Little Indian."

"If there were but tall marsh grasses growing here," said Little Indian, "I would weave a net in which to catch the silver fishes."

"Again I would counsel you to have patience," replied the Small Dog.

On a bush near at hand Unktomi, the Black Spider, sat industriously spinning a huge web. Presently she turned her little black eyes upon him and said, " 'Tis I who but a month ago taught Little Indian the art of net weaving."

"She speaks the truth," said the little Indian boy; "but there are no swamp grasses here with which to fashion a net, good Unktomi," he added, turning to the Black Spider.

"Therefore will I spin a net for you, O Little Indian, for well have you obeyed the laws of the forest and the prairie. I will spin a net at once and when it's finished you may cast it into yonder bright water and it will bring forth many fishes." Then she set to work industriously spinning and in a short time the net was finished.

"Now cast it into the bright waters," she commanded. "I am proud of you,

O Little Indian; I who taught the great god Michabo the art of knitting, he who smokes his pipe to fill the valleys with the haze of Indian summer."

Little Indian cast the net, and when he drew it from the river it was filled to overflowing with the silver fishes. Again and again he cast it in, and each time drew it forth overflowing.

"Hasten to your red-skinned brothers," said the Small Dog. "Tell them to come and fetch the silver fishes to their wigwams."

CHAPTER III

MANY FAREWELLS

THREE FEATHERS and his tribe were eager to follow Little Indian to his father's camp now that they had sufficient food to last them on their journey. Soon the ponies would be loaded with packs or harnessed between the long tepee poles, the ends dragging on the ground making a sort of sledge on which to fasten the camp baggage and cooking utensils.

While Little Indian, mounted on his piebald, waited for the warriors to join him, Maga-hota, the Gray Goose, sailed majestically across the sky, followed by her flock. She had spent the summer-half of the year in northern Greenland and was now returning. There was a

chill in the air as she fanned her great wings across the blue of the high heavens.

Icapsinsincadan, the Swift Swallow, gathered her flock together. "We are holding our councils and are ready to fly to the sunny southland," she twittered, pointing to a long line of swallows sitting on an old log by the river bank.

"Teach me some day to build a lodge of mud, for I would learn your way. Your small mud tepees are good, and I would learn many things from my feathered brothers," cried Little Indian.

"Farewell, my little red-skinned brother," said Tuhmaja, the Honey Bee.

"May you gather much honey ere the snowflakes fill the clover-tops," answered Little Indian.

"When they arrive I shall be safe in the hollow tree," replied Tuhmaja.

Next Tasnaheca, the Chipmunk, came to say farewell. "Here are nuts for you," he cried, taking several from his cheek-pouches and handing them to Little Indian. "You may need them on your journey."

Zica, the Red Squirrel, looked on, chattering and scolding from an overhanging bough. He was not generous like little Tasnaheca, nor was he a good friend. He was the crosspatch of the forest.

Unktomi, the Black Spider, swung herself down by a slender thread and looked at Little Indian with her small black eyes. "Farewell, O Little Fisher of the Bright and Silver Waters; may you never cast your net without finding an abundance of fishes."

"Farewell, O industrious Unktomi,"

replied Little Indian; "may the dew never hinder your web from catching flies and insects."

Then the Small Dog ran up whining, "It is time for us to leave, O Little Master."

CHAPTER IV

THE JOURNEY HOME

LITTLE INDIAN led the procession from the camp to the broad prairie. "My heart goes out to you," said Three Feathers. "May we have a safe journey to Big Chief, your father."

The heavily laden ponies, with the squaws and papooses, made slow progress, and for many days and nights they slowly wended their way over the broad plain. The supply of food, however, seemed sufficient, and all were content with the thought that they would soon reach Big Chief's camp where there was food a-plenty, dried buffalo and deer meat, as well as corn and wild rice.

The Small Dog was the constant com-

panion of "Little Medicine Man," as Three Feathers loved to call Little Indian. All the tribe looked upon him as having great power, for had he not delivered them from famine, and was he not leading them to a land of plenty?

One day a dull, gray cloud came up out of the north and hid the face of the sun. It looked like the bosom of a gray bird. Then little white feathers floated through the air and a chilly wind ruffled the dry prairie grass.

"Waziya is coming from the northland, driving his white ponies before him. Ere long they will cover the prairie," said the Small Dog with a shiver.

"Must we not make greater haste?" asked Little Indian. "They may overtake and hold us."

The Small Dog looked anxiously at the gloomy heavens.

"They may overtake us," he replied, "but they cannot hold us for I have taken oath, O Little Indian, to bring you safely to the tepee of your father."

Soon the snowflakes covered all the prairie, and towards evening the Small Dog turned aside and led them to a wooded hollow.

"We will camp here for the night," he said.

In a short time the wigwams were set up and the campfires burning brightly. The trees broke the force of the wind and the dead limbs and branches scattered over the ground supplied the cheerful fires. Still the storm continued and the snow grew deeper and deeper.

Little Indian went up to Three Feathers and said: "My brother, the Small Dog, says this will be a great storm. Tell your squaws to gather a

plentiful supply of wood for our fires. Waniyetu has indeed overtaken us."

When morning came, it was still snowing, and the prairie was covered deep with the snowflakes which Waniyetu had sent flying from his land in the north.

After the ponies were fed many of the younger braves strapped on snowshoes and went to look for game. These were made of maplewood and deer's hide and fastened on the feet by strips of leather. They were different from those worn by Little Indian, for each tribe has its own peculiar kind.

It would be folly to travel in the blinding snow, although Little Indian knew that their supply of food would run short if they were forced to remain long in the camp. He looked about to consult the Small Dog, but he was nowhere to be seen. Little Indian was

alone in his wigwam. Outside the wind moaned and wailed, piling the snow in great drifts. Wrapping his blanket about him, he fell asleep. In his dream he beheld a great tepee. A crown of sunlight lay upon it, pointed with a cluster of stars, the symbols of the cold northland.

It was painted to look like ice, and the four yellow legs, with great green claws extending down the front of the tepee, were drawn to represent the Thunder-bird. A glaring red buffalo frowned above the door, while bunches of crow feathers, strung with little bells, swung tinkling in the wind. And as he dreamed, Little Indian beheld a tall, white-haired man come out of the tepee. His face was painted yellow and a red line ran across his mouth and another across his eyes to his ears. In his outstretched hand he held a black

stone pipe and a mink tobacco pouch.

"Take these gifts, O Little Indian," he said, and in his dream the Indian lad put forth his hand. Then he awoke to find himself alone in his wigwam. He rubbed his eyes and looked about him. A slight noise caught his ear.

"Who walks around my tepee? Come in—come in!" cried Little Indian, thinking it might be the tall, white-haired man. Instead in came the Small Dog. On his four feet were snowshoes and in his mouth he carried a black stone pipe and a mink tobacco pouch.

"Accept, O Little Indian, these gifts from Waniyetu. From his snow tepee he sends the driving snow and the biting wind. But because you have obeyed the laws of the Great Spirit he bids me bring you this pipe. Smoke it and the storm will disappear."

Little Indian arose and took the pipe,

and after filling it from the mink tobacco pouch, stood in the doorway of his tepee. And the clouds of smoke that came from the pipe melted the snowflakes and a gentle rain fell. Slowly the snowdrifts vanished from the prairie, and by evening of the next day he entered his father's lodge.

CHAPTER V

LITTLE INDIAN'S FIRST DEER

IT was November, the "Moon of Snows." The frosts had turned into opal and orange the leaves of the forest and along the grass tops had laid their snowy laces. Colder grew the weather and gradually the rivers became coated with a thick layer of ice. Tate Waziyata, The Wind of the Northland, would soon be sending down his tribe of snowflakes.

Although considered quite a hero by the boys and girls since the day his father had sent him on an important mission to Three Feathers, Little Indian was modest, as all Indian boys are brought up to be, and indulged in all their games with the spirit of youth.

He had made into a rough sled the skull of the buffalo which he had slain and with the aid of two strong leather thongs drew it swiftly across the ice. Many a little Indian girl enjoyed sitting on this strange kind of a sled while the boys raced over the ice pretending they were swift mustangs.

The tribe was waiting for the first deep fall of snow. Then, equipped with bows and arrows, their feet shod with swift running snowshoes, they set out on a deer hunt. For several days the sky had been overcast. At night the wind moaned through the forest. Light flurries of snow fell, until one morning Little Indian awoke to find the ground covered with a deep mantle of white.

Strapping on his snowshoes, he wandered into the forest to look for deer trails. As he penetrated deeper and deeper into the woods, silent and mo-

tionless under the quiet sky and the soft covering of snow, he peered anxiously about for a footprint to tell him the deer were near. But search as he might, he could find no trace of them.

Suddenly Siyo, the Grouse, whizzed off through the wood. There was a whirl of snowflakes from her wings and feathers for all through the night she had slept beneath the warm snowdrift.

"O, Siyo, I will not hurt you," cried Little Indian. "Return and tell me where the deer are to be found."

Siyo paused in her flight. Then she flew back and settled down gently on the snow. Slowly she advanced toward Little Indian, stepping on the snow with the snowshoes with which the Great Spirit had provided her. The comb-like fringe which grows between her slender toes as winter approaches prevents her feet from sinking into the

soft snow and enables her to travel as well as if she had on a pair of snowshoes made of maplewood, such as Little Indian wore.

"Not far from here in a secluded glade," replied Siyo, "are the deer. But remember the Law. Kill only what you need for food." Then with a whir of wings she flew away.

Little Indian watched Siyo, the Ruffed Grouse, until she disappeared from view. Then he followed the trail down to the glade where she had told him the deer were sheltering themselves from the storm, for it was still snowing and Tate Waziyata was blowing his wind trumpets in the treetops.

It was the best kind of weather to hunt deer. The snow lay inches deep upon the ground and as Little Indian proceeded further he found tracks which told him plainly that deer had

sought shelter in the glade. The wind was blowing toward him, so that they could not scent his coming, and all that was needed was great precaution on his part not to make a noise to frighten them. Silently he worked his way forward, his snowshoes making no sound on the soft carpet of snow.

A little creek, now frozen over, ran along the trail down to the glade, ending in a salt lick where the animals came to eat the salt which lay upon the well-trodden edges of the muddy places.

Noiselessly he crept forward until he was close to the lick. So silently did he approach that the deer which were nosing under the snow for the salt were unaware of his coming. Fitting an arrow to his bow, he picked out a fine buck and was just about to let fly an arrow when a large dead limb overhead snapped beneath its weight of snow and

fell with a crash to the ground. Little Indian was forced to dodge it as it fell. It was well that the cracking of the limb gave him sufficient warning, otherwise he might have been severely injured. The noise alarmed the timid deer and off they went.

There was nothing now to do but build a tiny hut of branches in which to hide until daybreak. Retracing his steps for a mile or more, he made a fire and cooked a rabbit which he was successful in shooting. After this he returned to the salt lick. When the hut of branches was completed he hid himself inside and wrapped his blanket about him. It was quite comfortable, and he soon fell asleep, to be awakened in the early dawn by a slight noise. Peering cautiously out, he saw to his delight that the deer had returned. Offering up a prayer to the Great Spirit

to aid him, as the tribe was in need of food, Little Indian carefully took aim and the big buck at which he aimed the day before fell pierced with the arrow. Before its comrades could scamper away he laid low another fine deer with a well-directed shot. Hastily returning to the camp he informed Big Chief of what he had done, who at once set out with his braves to bring home the deer.

"Well have you helped the tribe, O Little Indian," said his old grandmother, laying her hand upon his head.

CHAPTER VI

THE BEAR HUNT

IT was a long, hard winter. Hungry times these were in the camp. The stock of dried meat and corn was daily becoming less and less. Almost the only food to be had was deer meat. But this was hard to get. For some time there had been a crust of snow, but it was too light to bear an Indian's weight. Even with snowshoes it was difficult to travel, for the crust cracked, turning up the sharp edges and tripping the most skillful runner, and the sound of the breaking crust frightened the deer.

"Are you hungry, mother?" asked Little Indian.

"No, my son," answered Blue Water, "but I am very faint."

"I will make broth from the bones of foxes and wildcats that are strewn about the camp," said Little Indian's grandmother.

When this simple meal was over the old grandmother turned to Little Indian and said:

"The Great Spirit will guide you."

Then Little Indian set out, but the deer heard his feet breaking through the snow crust. He no sooner caught sight of them than they were away on the run.

After walking for several miles he came to a tree in which was a large hole some distance up the massive trunk. The bark was well scratched, and Little Indian at once knew it was the hiding place of a bear. Making a bundle of

Little Indian led the procession from the camp to the broad prairie.

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dry, half rotten wood, he set fire to it and, placing several limbs against the tree, climbed up and dropped the smoking wood into the hole. Then sliding down to the ground, he retired a little way. He did not have long to wait. In a few minutes, half suffocated by the smoke, the bear came out and climbed awkwardly down the tree.

Taking careful aim, Little Indian let fly an arrow, and the bear rolled over dead upon the snow.

It was a hard task to skin him, but Little Indian finally finished the job. He at once cooked some meat for himself and, after hanging out of reach of the wolves what he could not carry, set out for the camp. His grandmother at once cut some of the meat into thin slices and put them in a kettle to stew.

"Well have you hunted, my son,"

said Big Chief, entering the lodge, "for you have saved your mother's life." And that night, before Little Indian went to sleep, he offered up a prayer of thankfulness to the Great Spirit.

CHAPTER VII

NEWS BY SMOKE SIGNALS

THE camp was all excitement, for Big Chief and his warriors were about to set out on a war hunt. They had selected from the herd the white and light gray ponies and had put on war dress of the plainest white so that a group of them would appear in the distance like a bank of snow.

For some time a band of hostile Indians had been hovering near the camp, creeping in under cover of the night to steal the ponies.

This had angered Big Chief, and calling together his braves, he asked for volunteers to go out upon the warpath to punish the thieving band.

As Big Chief and his devoted warriors departed, Little Indian, who had been left behind, wished that he had been allowed to go with them. But his father's last words were:

"My son, you must remain in camp. See that you protect those who remain, and when I return, if the Great Spirit so wills, I will bring you one of the enemy's ponies. Watch for our smoke signals and you will learn of our coming and of our success with the enemy."

Then Big Chief rode away, followed by his brave band of warriors.

That night, as Little Indian sat by his wigwam gazing over the snow-white prairie, he saw something blazing through the air like a fiery dragonfly.

"Look, mother! Father is shooting his burning arrows for a signal."

Blue Water came and stood by her son's side. "Yes," she answered, "be-

fore he left he smeared his arrows with something that will burn easily."

"All of them?" asked Little Indian.

"No, my son; only a few; those which he wished to use for signals."

"I hope he is not in danger," said Little Indian, as he turned and entered his wigwam to sleep until the morning.

For many days there were anxious hearts in the camp. Big Chief did not return. But one afternoon, a long distance off, a puff of smoke shot up into the air. Then in a few minutes another followed, and yet another.

"Father is returning," cried Little Indian, rushing up to his mother, Blue Water, to tell her the joyful news. "I have seen his smoke signals afar off."

Blue Water shaded her eyes and looked across the broad prairie. The last smoke balloon was slowly fading into thin air.

"Yes," she answered, "he has built a fire upon which he has thrown the damp grass of the prairie. He has spread his many-colored blanket over it, holding down the edges to shut in the smoke. Then when he lifted the blanket, the smoke balloon rose to tell us of his coming. All is well."

CHAPTER VIII

THE BIG CHIEF RETURNS

BIG CHIEF and his warriors were returning to the camp. Little Indian and his mother, Blue Water, stood on the edge of the prairie to welcome them. They could see that Big Chief had a long string of ponies.

"Father has captured many of the enemy's horses," cried Little Indian.

"Yes, my son," replied Blue Water, "I can count five. How many do you make out?"

Little Indian looked carefully and replied, "Five I see, O mother. They also have little packs on their backs."

"They are the blankets and war-robes of the enemy," she replied. "You shall have a pony and a robe. Your

father promised you a pony and he will no doubt give you a robe, also."

Presently Big Chief and his band entered the camp. After they had eaten and divided the spoils, Big Chief and his band sat around in a circle. Then Big Chief arose and told of their adventures. "We followed the enemy into the mountains but found the trail very difficult. We were forced to leave our ponies and continue the pursuit on foot. Finally we lost our way. Coming to the edge of a steep cliff, we were forced to tie ourselves together in order to reach a ridge of rock below.

"Below this lay another ridge. It was impossible to climb back, and the rocks were too steep for us to climb down. It was hundreds of feet to the bottom; so far below it lay that we could but dimly see it. If we remained

where we were, we would surely starve. Then I said:

" 'If we stay here, we die. Surely the Great Spirit does not wish us to remain like weak women and die like dogs!' Then I sang my death song, and when I had finished, I went to the edge of the cliff and jumped.' "

No sooner had Big Chief finished than one of the chiefs arose, and said:

"We waited for a while and then went to the edge of the cliff. Far below we saw the figure of a man waving a quiver of arrows.

" ' 'Tis the soul of our Chief beckoning us to follow,' we whispered. Then each one in turn sang his death song and leaped off. Like swiftly falling arrows we fell until we struck a great snowdrift. We sank in so far that we had much difficulty in getting out. At

last we freed ourselves and found Big Chief unharmed."

Little Indian went over and stood by his father. "Father," he asked in a low voice, "were you not afraid when you leaped from that great height?"

"A warrior who feels fear is not worthy of the name," replied Big Chief. "The Great Spirit rewarded us by leading us to the ponies of our enemy. We found them at the foot of the mountains, but the thieving Indians were nowhere in sight. Perhaps they were lost in the mountain snowdrifts. Who knows? If so, 'tis the will of the Great Spirit."

CHAPTER IX

LITTLE INDIAN WELCOMES THE SPRING

"HONK, honk, honk!"

"'Tis Maga-hota flying to the Northland!" cried Little Indian. "Spring is coming."

Blue Water, his mother, looked up at the blue sky and smiled. Then she turned her attention again to the wampum strings which she was making. It was pretty work stringing the fresh-water shells in fancy rows upon a dress. Little Indian watched her for some time, then walked over to where his baby brother, Papoose, lay in his cradle of stiff boards, with a hood of skin to shield his face. On the edge of the hood dangled beads and birds' wings, which little Papoose played with,

stretching out his small fingers to touch them when the gentle spring breezes swung them to and fro.

The cradle was propped up against the side of the wigwam so that the little Papoose might see all that was going on, for Blue Water had little time to amuse him, and if he cried, he cried until he was tired of crying.

"Papoose grow to be big chief some day," said Little Indian with a laugh. Blue Water laughed, too, for she was happy. Spring was coming, and the cold winter was almost over.

It was time, too, for Three Feathers and his warriors to leave. All through the long, dreary months they had made their camp close by. And very grateful they were to Big Chief for his invitation to come and hunt the game with him, and to Little Indian, who had led them safely to his father's wigwam.

It seemed a long time since then to Little Indian. But he had not forgotten the Small Dog, who had done him so many favors, nor how he had painted its face with vermilion to look like a fox, and had hunted grouse near their camp, bringing back food enough for the starving people.

"Mother," said Little Indian, "I hear Tate Wiyohpeyata, the West Wind, singing in the treetops. And only this morning I saw Sisoka, the Robin, hopping on the prairie."

"Come here, my son," said Blue Water, "and I will tell you how Sisoka stained his vest a crimson color.

"Once upon a time Sisoka's vest was gray and dim of color. 'Twas the time when old white Mato dwelt alone in far off Northland. He was king of all the bears, very cunning, very cruel. Once he heard a hunter telling his small son

he must be careful not to let the burning fire turn to ashes gray and lifeless. So all night the boy kept adding fuel to the sinking fire. But, alas! he fell dreaming, and the fire smouldered dimly. Then old Mato, who was fearful of the fire, feared no longer. He was just about to seize him, when Sisoka, flying thither, fanned the embers into flaming, scorched his breast a crimson color, but saved the little boy from Mato, whom the flames caused untold terror. Therefore, children, love Sisoka with his vest of crimson color."

CHAPTER X

LITTLE INDIAN'S GIFT

ONE morning in the beautiful springtime Little Indian made his way into the forest. For many days he had hunted but without success. As he followed the trail up the mountain, he came across the nest of Siyo, the Grouse. Ever since the day she had told him the deer lay hidden in the glade he considered her one of his best friends. So he did not disturb her as she sat on the nest she had made by hollowing out the ground and lining it with a few leaves, but passed by silently until at length he reached the top of the mountain.

Overhead the white clouds lay upon the blue deep like swans. The Great

Sun beamed down with his magic rays, sending the sap running up the tree trunks and the slender stalks of the bluebells. Little Indian lay down beneath the shade of a large tree, and was soon asleep. And while he slept he dreamed a strange dream. The Old White Bear of the Mountain came and sat down beside him, saying in a low growling voice: "Little Indian, lend me your bow and arrow."

Timidly Little Indian handed them to the Old White Bear who, fitting an arrow to the string, let fly the arrow, but his long claw caught in the string and spoiled his aim.

"Why do you not cut off your claws," asked Little Indian, "for then you could send the arrow straight to the mark?"

"I shall need my claws for fighting," answered the Old White Bear.

Then he went away, and as he climbed up the rocks, a loosened stone was set in motion by the pressure of his great foot, so that it rolled down with a loud noise and awoke Little Indian, who started up from his sleep. He looked in vain for the Old White Bear, but seeing him nowhere, he remembered his dream.

"Dreams always carry a message," said Little Indian to himself. "What was the meaning of mine, I wonder?" And he pondered long as he retraced his footsteps. On reaching the camp, he went to find his old grandmother. She had told him many stories and legends, so he recounted his dream to her. And when he had finished, he said:

"Tell me, O Grandmother, the meaning of my dream?"

The old squaw smiled and answered:

"The Great Spirit has given all the

animals weapons. To Sunktokeca, the Wolf, he gave long sharp teeth. To Mato, the Bear, great claws. To Tamdoska, the Deer, sharp-pointed antlers. To Tatanka, the Buffalo, great, heavy hoofs to trample his enemies underfoot. To Huya, the Eagle, sharp talons and a strong beak. No weapons made by hand did he give to them. Therefore they have no right to use any other than those he gave them."

"What did the Great Spirit give me?" asked Little Indian.

"The power to make your own weapons," answered the old squaw, "and with the command to kill the animals for food only or in self-defense."

CHAPTER XI

THE WHITE FEATHER

ONE day Big Chief came to Little Indian, and laying his hand upon his shoulder, said in a kind voice, "My son, it is time for you to become a warrior. Go and fast. Alone you must remain until in your dreams the Good Manito, the Master of Life, commands you what to do. Go and fast, and when you return you shall recount your dream, and describe the bird or animal which you have seen."

Silently Little Indian left the camp and made his way into the forest. Far into the shady depths he went until he came to a large oak tree, under which he lay down to fast.

Wearily passed the day and night, and hungry grew the Indian boy. But still no dream came to him. At length on the fifth night, as he was wearily tossing on his bed of leaves, moaning with the pangs of hunger, he dreamed of Wakiyedan, the Pigeon. White as a snowflake it was, except its breast, which was as blue as the heavens.

Little Indian awoke and slowly retraced his steps to the wigwam of his father. When he reached the camp, weak and weary, Big Chief, Blue Water, his mother, and all his kindred gathered about him to hear his dream. No one spoke, but each listened intently while he told his tale. Then they gave him food and drink.

Soon after he took his bow and quiver of arrows and set out to kill the pigeon, for this was to be his medicine, his

"good-luck," his strength in battle, and his guide after death to the beautiful hunting grounds. No warrior ever goes into battle without his medicine bag, and Little Indian knew he must find a pigeon in order to satisfy the custom of his tribe and be entitled to a place among the warriors.

As he entered the forest, he remembered his dream of many moons ago in which the strange voice bade him go into the woods to find the Man of Wood. Bending his steps toward the clearing, he came to the tree whose trunk was carved in the form of a man. Sitting down beside it, he waited for an omen. Presently a voice cried: "O Little Indian, fulfill your dreams. Take your pipe and fill it, and as before, the smoke will turn to snow-white pigeons,—all but one, which will have a blue breast.

Shoot it with your sharpest arrow and from its wing pluck a feather and place it in your hair. Then shall your tribe call you 'Wearer of the White Feather.' "

Little Indian did as he was bid, and from the smoke that arose from his pipe flew forth a flock of pigeons, one with a breast as blue as the sky. At this one Little Indian aimed an arrow. And when it fell to the ground he picked it up and carried it to his wigwam.

The next day when cleaned and the skin with all its bright feathers well dried in the sun, it was hung in his wigwam forever to be his "medicine bag."

"Did I not tell you long ago," said his old grandmother, "that some day you would be called the 'Wearer of the White Feather?' Do you not remember telling me your first dream and

then again of the pipe whose smoke turned into pigeons?"

"Yes," answered Little Indian solemnly; "I remember!"

CHAPTER XII

THE FIRST WAR JOURNEY

LITTLE INDIAN was going out upon his first war journey. The sun was just coming up over the hilltops, and Tate Wiyohiyanpa, the East Wind, was gently swaying the trees and grasses. The tribe stood around about him while he mounted his favorite pony. Little Indian required no saddle or bridle; he was too skillful a rider for that. A lariat twisted about his pony's lower jaw was all he needed in the shape of reins. But this was not its only decoration; its mane and tail were braided with hawk feathers, the very same feathers which Little Indian had stripped from the cruel hawk from

whom he had saved his faithful friend Hinakaja, the Owl.

Around his waist Little Indian wore a rawhide belt, fastened to which was his knife sheath and a small bag of dried meat. He carried his bow and arrows on his neck, the latter held in an otterskin case. His braided scalp-lock on the top of his head was fastened with an eagle feather. Big Chief stood by admiring his son, thinking of the day when he had first started out in like manner. Great care had been taken in selecting the best pony as well as the weapon the young Indian carried so proudly. The buffalo-hide war shield was a great protection against the arrows of the enemy. Little Indian paused by the side of his pony before mounting. Blue Water gazed at him with the loving eyes of a mother, while his grandmother, the old squaw who

had told him so many legends of his people, came forward and handed him a buffalo robe and several pairs of moccasins which she had made herself.

Little Indian was now fourteen, tall for his age, with hard, seasoned muscles. Like all Indians he carried himself with great dignity, and especially so on this occasion, for was it not his first departure upon a war journey? And this was a most momentous occasion, for the task had been entrusted to him, as the son of the Big Chief, to recover a Medicine trophy which had been stolen by a Blackfoot Indian from the Medicine Lodge.

Silently he mounted his pony and rode away. It was no easy task which had been allotted to him. To go into the heart of the enemy's country and retake the long stolen trophy was fraught with great danger. But Little

Indian did not hesitate; in fact, he gloried in the chance to show his bravery and skill although he made no outward sign of satisfaction.

It was in the springtime of the year and the flowers were smiling under the morning sun. Toward evening he saw a small herd of antelopes. Quickly dismounting, he hobbled his pony and then crawled toward a small clump of bushes. It was impossible to approach nearer without being seen. Presently, to his delight, they drew closer, and, taking careful aim, he shot the foremost buck. He now had fresh meat for his supper, and very soon his campfire was lighted and he was prepared to spend his first night alone on the prairie.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WOODPECKER'S SECRET

FOR many days Little Indian traveled over the broad prairie, his willing little mustang carrying him without faltering. There was plenty of game to be had, and Little Indian had no cause to fear for lack of food. Neither did he see any hostile Indians. So far all had gone well.

Toward nightfall he came to a wooded belt fringed on one side of the great prairie. Entering the wood for a short distance, he pitched his camp for the night. In the west the great sun was slowly sinking to rest. The swallows were flying low in the air and the perfume of the wild flowers came down the evening breeze.

As Little Indian sat quietly by his fire eating his simple supper he heard a slight noise. Turning his eyes toward an old tree, many of whose branches were so covered with moss that they seemed hardly a part of the withered trunk, he saw Hitunkasan, the Weasel, creeping stealthily up one of the dead limbs. Up and up he climbed until he reached an opening. But no sooner had he peeped inside than he turned tail and ran swiftly down the old tree, scurrying away into the depths of the woods. At the same moment, a sharp noise that sounded like "Whee-ree! Whee-ree!" came from the dark cavity, and Kanketanka, the Woodpecker, flew out.

"Tell me, O Little Indian," she cried, "whither went the cruel Hitunkasan?"

"He has fled into the woods," replied Little Indian. "Did he try to rob your nest, O Kanketanka?"

"It was the sight of the snake skin that frightened him," replied the woodpecker. " 'Twas lucky that my mate found Wanduska's old skin, the one thing the wicked Hitunkasan fears."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Little Indian. "Does Hitunkasan fear an old skin? He is a brave Weasel warrior!"

"Softly, softly, O Little Indian," replied Kanketanka, "lest he hear you. He thinks it is Wanduska himself."

Little Indian hushed his laughter and replied, "Have no further fear, for Hitunkasan is deep within the woods. No doubt he is still running away."

" 'Tis well," replied the woodpecker, smoothing her feathers. "This placing of a snake skin, interwoven in our nests, is a secret which we have learned from our ancestors. It is also a great protection from Zica, the Red Squirrel, and Uncisicedan, the Crow, for they

also love to rob our nests. My father taught me this simple trick, and he learned it from his grandfather. I tell it to you, O Little Indian, for you hold in respect the forest law to kill only for food and for protection."

"I will keep your secret," replied Little Indian quietly.

CHAPTER XIV

THE RABBIT ADVISES LITTLE INDIAN

HANYETUWI, the Moon, was high in the heavens when Little Indian was awakened by a strange thump, thump, thump! Quietly sitting up, he peered about him to discover what was the cause of this strange sound. His eyes fell upon a pile of brushwood which had evidently been heaped together by the winter winds blowing across the prairie. Twining in and out and over it was a tangle of wild vines. From beneath this rude shelter came a number of wild rabbits. Every now and then one would stop and thump the ground with his hind feet.

One old gray rabbit, on seeing Little Indian, left the rest and came over to where he sat.

"Good evening, venerable Mastinca!" cried Little Indian. "Will I disturb your tribe if I watch their moonlight dance?"

"Not at all," replied the old rabbit. "I will rest here with you and keep watch. Pisko, the Night Hawk, is ever on the alert to seize one of us in his claws. I will stay here and give the warning should he approach. It takes keen eyes to see him for he makes no noise; he sails by as silent as a ghost."

Soon all the little rabbits began their moonlight dance. Faster and faster they spun around, until they looked like the balls of thistledown that float about in the Indian summer.

"O Venerable Mastinca!" asked Little Indian, "can you tell me how far

from here lies the camp of Two Moons, the great Blackfoot chief?"

The old rabbit paused before he answered. " 'Tis not so far," he replied. "It is beyond the Dwelling Places of the Evil Spirits. Through this gloomy land you must make your way. I have heard that the Evil People have emptied all the springs, burned the prairie grass and killed the game."

"Is there no other trail by which I may reach the Blackfoot camp save through this dismal country?" asked Little Indian.

"None," replied the old rabbit, "for it spreads out directly in your path."

"Then I will travel through it," said Little Indian in a firm voice, "for Big Chief, my father, has sent me on this errand and I would not have him know that his son was weak of heart."

"Then let me give you good counsel,"

said the old rabbit. "See that you take plenty of dried meat; also much water, for your tongue will cry for water and there will be no spring in which you may quench your thirst."

"I will follow your advice," replied Little Indian, "and tomorrow I will prepare for my perilous journey through the Land of the Evil Spirits."

CHAPTER XV

LITTLE INDIAN PRESSES FORWARD

WHEN Little Indian awoke the next morning he pondered deeply over what Mastinca, the old rabbit, had told him. It was indeed a dangerous journey through the Land of the Evil Spirits. Yet there was no fear in the heart of the little Indian lad, only a grim determination that he would follow out the wishes of his father and bring back the stolen Medicine Trophy from the Blackfeet.

At once he set about to procure a sufficient quantity of buffalo meat, and to make the necessary water bags from the buffalo hides in order to carry a good supply of water with him. For

otherwise he knew he would never be able to cross the barren land that lay between him and the camp of Two Moons, chief of the Indians who had stolen the Medicine Trophy from the lodge in his father's camp.

There were numerous buffaloes scattered over the prairie and before nightfall Little Indian had killed two.

It took him all the next day to make the water bags and prepare the buffalo meat by cutting it into thin strips to dry in the sun. Finally, when everything was ready, he started upon his journey, offering up a prayer to the Great Spirit for aid in his perilous mission.

It was early morning. Anpao Wicanhpi, the Morning Star, was looking down from the high heavens. Little Indian mounted his mustang. On either side of the faithful little beast

hung a well-filled water bag, also a supply of fresh grass.

As the day wore on, Little Indian noticed a great change in the appearance of the prairie. The tall waving grass gave way to a stretch of dry sage. Gradually that disappeared and the plain became a desert. Toward nightfall he found himself entering a waste of rock and sand stretching away as far as the eye could reach. Great rocks worn with storms of ages reared their forbidding forms across his path. Little Indian's heart was filled with dread. It seemed as if an evil spell lay upon the land.

"It is indeed the Country of the Evil Spirits," he whispered. "Wakansica, the Evil Spirit, has built himself a lodge and his Evil People dwell in the caves among the rocks."

Dismounting, he gave his pony some

From the smoke that arose flew forth a flock of pigeons, one with a breast as blue as the sky.
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water and a small supply of grass. Soon great shadows crept out from behind the rocks and night came silently down upon the barren waste. Little Indian lay down and folded his blanket about him. But he could not sleep. Even the mustang was restless and whinnied in a frightened manner, pushing his muzzle against his master's hand for sympathy.

CHAPTER XVI

SAFE ACROSS THE DESERT

IT was barely daylight when Little Indian arose and made ready to resume his journey. Carefully measuring out a small supply of water and grass for his pony, he ate his meager breakfast as quickly as possible. Then mounting his mustang, he guided him as best he could over the rough and sandy desert.

Toward noon of the third day both he and the faithful little animal were parched with thirst. There was but little water, and the supply of grass was nearly exhausted. He still had plenty of dried meat, but where to find water troubled him greatly. Without

it he knew that he and the mustang would never be able to reach their destination. How much further the desert lay before him he could not tell. Still he kept manfully on.

Soon night came and he was forced to camp again upon the hot sands of the desert. The next day found him weak and weary. Even the mustang seemed to have lost his spirit and dragged himself along at a slow rate. Little Indian dismounted and walked by his side. The water was now entirely gone, and if he did not come across a spring in a short time he knew that both must perish in the wilderness.

"My throat is filled with fire," Little Indian muttered to himself.

As if in answer to his cry of despair, his pony raised his nose in the air and whinnied. Then he trotted weakly toward the south.

Little Indian followed and in a short time the clever little animal brought him to a large pool beneath an overhanging rocky ledge. After drinking deeply, Little Indian filled the water bags and refreshed and encouraged, he mounted his pony and rode off at a faster pace. At last he saw in the distance the border of a verdant prairie. The pony, too, seemed to know that they were approaching a country where the grass grew tall and sweet. His pace quickened to a gallop and soon the Land of the Evil Spirits was left behind.

Tethering his pony so that he might eat the sweet grass, Little Indian looked about him. A covey of prairie grouse suddenly rose before him and sailed away, but not before he killed one with a well directed shot.

"Ah," cried Little Indian, "again my heart is singing, for the Great Spirit

has brought me safely through the Evil Land to a smiling country."

There was a cluster of trees a short distance away and leading his pony thither, Little Indian made ready to camp for the night. Building a small fire of very dry wood in order to avoid the telltale smoke as much as possible, in case he might be near the camp of his enemies, he cooked his supper and then lay down to sleep.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CAMP OF TWO MOONS

IT was midnight when Little Indian awoke. The snapping of a dry twig caused him to seize his bow and arrows. Peering into the darkness, he saw two gleaming lights.

As he raised his bow to defend himself, feeling certain they were the eyes of some wild animal, he heard a voice from the darkness:

"Turn aside your arrow, O Little Indian. 'Tis Inmutanka, the Lynx. He comes not to harm you but to bring good tidings."

Little Indian laid aside his bow and replied, "Tell me, O stealthy Inmutanka, what is your message? I have

heard of you from the Great Beaver, white with snows of many winters."

"I know well your errand and would help you," replied the Lynx. "Not many arrows' flight from here lies the camp of Two Moons. In the center of the village, in the Great Medicine Lodge, is hidden the Trophy which you seek. I have seen it with my own eyes when all the warriors were sleeping. Their dogs have lost their cunning, for I was well on my way with a piece of venison before they awoke to scent the trail of my crafty footsteps!"

"Many thanks, O kind Inmutanka," replied Little Indian. "Tomorrow will I locate the camp and make my plans. May the day come when I can render aid to you."

"Say no more," replied the Lynx, "but close your eyes and sleep, for you will need all your cunning to regain the

stolen Trophy, and you are yet weary with your journey."

"You speak true words," answered Little Indian. "I will follow your counsel," and he wrapped his blanket about him and lay down to sleep.

It was not an easy matter to approach the camp of Two Moons, as Little Indian found out the next day when he attempted to get close enough to locate the Medicine Lodge. He had left his mustang behind in the grove of trees, feeling that on foot he was safer in case he had to hide suddenly. At last he dared go no further until darkness came on to hide him from the sharp eyes of the enemy. Finally he felt the hour had arrived. Dropping to his hands and knees, he crawled from rock to rock until he reached the edge of the grove in which Two Moons had pitched his camp. Here he paused

again. The campfires were still burning, although not so brightly, and he knew that many of the Blackfeet had not yet gone to their lodges. What he most feared were the dogs. For some time after their masters had gone to sleep they would prowl about the camp hunting for bones. Until the dogs became quiet, Little Indian knew that he must lie patiently where he was and wait, for to be discovered meant capture and certain death.

When finally the Indian village grew quiet, Little Indian arose and crept silently forward. Sustained by the inherited courage of his people, he entered upon his dangerous errand with a brave heart. His thoughts for a moment turned back to his own tribe. No doubt by this time his mother, Blue Water, lay in peaceful slumber. Perhaps she was dreaming of him, far away

in a hostile country. He quickly put aside these thoughts, for the moment was too full of danger to indulge in them. He was determined to fulfill the mission on which he had been sent by his father, Big Chief. For many moons his people had chafed at the thought that their Medicine Trophy lay in a lodge of the hostile Blackfeet. Its recovery would mean fame for Little Indian, and the right to take his place among the warriors of his own tribe. Grasping his long knife tightly in his teeth, he crawled carefully along, stopping now and again to listen for the bark of a wary dog. But no sound came to his anxious ear.

Gradually he worked his way through the outskirts of the silent village. All was quiet, and he advanced still further, until to his relief he saw the dim outlines of the Great Medi-

cine Lodge looming up before him.

He stood up in the shadow of a large tree and called upon the Great Spirit to aid him in his perilous undertaking. Then he sank again to his knees and crawled forward toward the lodge. As he neared it he rose to his feet and swiftly but silently he approached the entrance. With one hasty look he glanced about him, and then, drawing aside the buffalo robe, entered. Groping his way about in the darkness, he ran his hand over the poles that supported the roof. At last, when he had all but given up in despair, his fingers encountered the bracelet of shells which had been stolen from his tribe. It was only the work of a moment to free it from the pole on which it was hung. With his heart beating almost to suffocation he hurried out. Softly retracing his steps he entered the corral in which

were herded the fast war ponies. After a moment's hesitation he entered, and, selecting the finest, with an exultant yell he drove out the rest in wild confusion. In a moment the camp was a scene of savage uproar. Shadowy forms rushed hither and thither, but Little Indian was far away before the frightened ponies were caught. Stopping only for a moment at the clump of trees to seize hold of the tether of his own faithful little mustang, he galloped away across the prairie. Tightly grasped in his left hand was the bracelet of shells, which would bring him fame and a place among the great warriors of his own tribe.

CHAPTER XVIII

LITTLE INDIAN IS WARNED

"THE Great Spirit has indeed been with you," cried Blue Water, as she folded her arms about Little Indian.

The entire tribe was glad at his return; all but one. White Otter alone wore a frown. In him Little Indian had an enemy, and a bitter one, for had not Little Indian humiliated him before the tribe during the buffalo hunt? And had not Little Indian sent him home weaponless, like a squaw?

Hinakaja, the Owl, had watched White Otter since his return to the camp alone on his pony, without

weapon and robe. The wise Owl had many friends and the Forest Folk are quick to spread news. They had been told how White Otter had followed Little Indian across the prairie with the intention of doing him bodily harm, and how he had been outwitted and sent home disgraced.

"Beware of White Otter," said the Owl, looking at Little Indian with his great round eyes. "He will not rest until he harms you."

Little Indian gave a grunt like an old warrior.

"I fear him not, for he is a coward and a sneak."

"The more reason, O Little Indian," replied the wise Owl. "He will not fight you in the open, but will use unfair means to harm you."

Little Indian grew thoughtful. "I will keep my eyes open, O Hinakaja."

Then the bird flew away to the dark forest, and Little Indian wrapped himself in his blanket and lay down to pleasant dreams.

Through the trees and the dying reeds on the river bank the cool north wind uttered a melancholy note. The stars glittered afar off in the dark blue heaven and the Milky Way, the Pathway of the Ghosts, glimmered in its silvery whiteness.

Hinakaja sailed over the prairie as silently as a ghost. His large round eyes looked in at Little Indian peacefully sleeping in his tepee. Hovering over the quiet camp, he peered in at White Otter. Sleep had not come to his eyes. He lay wrapped in his blanket, wide awake, planning how to defeat Little Indian. Little did he think that he was being watched.

"Evil one," muttered Hinakaja, "I will act as sentinel tonight lest harm befall Little Indian."

CHAPTER XIX

A FRIENDLY COUNCIL

WHITE OTTER was now more envious of Little Indian than ever. He hated him because he had brought back the Medicine Trophy, the Great Bracelet of Shells. He hated him, too, because his heart still rankled with the thought that it was Little Indian who had punished him on the day of the buffalo hunt when he had tried to sneak ahead of the warriors and kill the first buffalo. Neither had he forgiven him for having sent him back to the camp without robe and weapon.

He had tried to turn the animals against him, but had not been very successful; only a few would listen to him. Of course Wanduska, the Snake, lent a

willing ear, and Zica, the spiteful Red Squirrel. But the rest of the Prairie and Forest Folk refused to listen to White Otter. Moreover, they took counsel together as to how they should help Little Indian.

Sisoka, the Robin, was most indignant. "I have not forgotten, O brothers, how Little Indian saved my blue eggs from the thieving Zica."

"Now we know why he sides with Little Elk," cried the Forest Folk.

"And I shall never forget how he saved one of my little ones from Wanduska," cried Wajioji, the Wood Thrush, flying down from her nest in a bushy fir tree that was not much larger than a currant bush.

"You should build your nest high above the earth," said Uncisicedan, the Crow. "Do I not build mine in the tallest pine tree?"

"Let us hold a council," suggested Mastinca, the Rabbit, turning to Wica, the Raccoon. "Do you call together all the four-footed Brothers of the Forest and we will talk the matter over. We may be able to help our little red-skinned brother."

"Then let us ask Kanketanka, the Woodpecker, to sound his drum-call so that all the Forest People may know that they are summoned to a council," cried Zitkatanka, the Blackbird.

"Someone must find him, for we may not wait. Every moment is now precious," cried Mastinca, the big Rabbit. "I will go find him. I think he has his lodge in the old dead tree by the mountain trail."

CHAPTER XX

LITTLE INDIAN IS TO BE PROTECTED

WHEN Mastinca, the big Rabbit, arrived at the old dead tree close to the mountain trail, he looked up to see whether Kanketanka was in his lodge. Sure enough, there he was. As soon as he saw Mastinca he began a loud "rat, a tat, tat," using the dead branch for a drum.

"Cease your drumming," cried Mastinca, "and give ear to what I would say to you," and he told Kanketanka, the Woodpecker, what the Forest Folk wished him to do. "Tomorrow morning early you must sound the drum-call, so that all the animals and birds may hear it and come to the Great Council."

"I will do as you ask me," replied

Kanketanka. "For our little red-skinned brother I will drum my loudest. No one in the forest or upon the pleasant prairie shall ever say my drum beats did not call him to the council."

"Well said," replied Mastinca, "and should you need another drummer call upon me early, and I will come to help you." As he finished speaking, Mastinca stamped with his hind feet upon the ground, thump! thump! thump!

"That is our signal. When danger threatens, one of us sounds the call and we all run to cover."

Early the next morning Kanketanka sounded his drum-call loud and strong. From the forest and the prairie came the animals and birds. And when they were all assembled in a half circle, they talked for a long time. And afterward everyone promised to do his best to aid Little Indian.

To Zitkato, the Bluebird, was given the duty of messenger, for she was so swift of wing.

"You shall bear the messages to Little Indian that will warn him of danger," said Mastinca, the Rabbit. "Whoever shall discover that White Otter is on mischief bent shall at once inform Zitkato, who will fly swiftly to put Little Indian on his guard."

"Let us also keep a sharp eye on Wanduska, the Blacksnake," cried Zitkatanka, the Blackbird, "for he is in league with White Otter."

"Also on Zica, the Red Squirrel," said Sisoka, the Robin, " 'twas only yesterday I saw him talking with White Otter."

"Alas," cried Wajioji, the gentle Wood Thrush, "that any of the Forest Folk should be so wicked as to wish harm to Little Indian!"

"Go!" he commanded, turning to the cowardly Indian.

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"They are few in number, O gentle Wajioji," said Tanagidan, the Humming Bird. "His friends are many; they can not be numbered. But his enemies are counted upon the toes of my foot."

CHAPTER XXI

WHITE OTTER HAS VISITORS

NOW when Wanduska, the Blacksnake, and Zica, the Red Squirrel, learned that the Forest Folk had held a council at which they had planned means to protect Little Indian, they at once set out for White Otter's lodge.

Wanduska glided along the earth while Zica sprang from tree to tree. At length they came near to where White Otter had pitched his wigwam. It was much nearer the forest than were the wigwams of the other braves, for he who has evil in his heart would rather be alone in order to escape the eyes of his brothers more easily.

"Now do you creep into his wigwam," said Zica from his treetop. "Glide through the grasses, O slippery Wanduska."

Wanduska, however, was careful as well as crafty. Neither did he enjoy being the one to brave all danger.

"Why do you not climb down and creep to his wigwam?"

"Coward!" cried Zica, chattering fiercely from his treetop. "You are very slim and agile, and between the stalks of grasses you can glide without a murmur; you will never be discovered by the eye of Little Indian!"

But Wanduska would not be flattered into going alone to White Otter's wigwam. Zica, perceiving this, came down from his tree, chattering crossly all the while.

"Bah!" he exclaimed on reaching the

ground. "'He travels the faster who travels alone.'"

"Then why don't you carry the message to White Otter? I will wait for you here," answered Wanduska with a wicked gleam in his small eyes.

"Oh, come along then!" replied Zica. "I will go with you and see that no one steps on your cowardly head."

"Have a care how you speak!" said Wanduska, with a hiss. "Have a care, you red-headed chatterbox."

Zica, seeing that the Blacksnake was angry, decided it were wiser to say nothing further. The two then crept stealthily forward, Wanduska gliding silently through the grasses, while Zica crept on tiptoe close by his side.

"What's that?" cried Zica, his teeth chattering with fear.

"'Twas the song of an arrow as it sped above the grass tops," answered

Wanduska, wriggling in swift curves along the earth to avoid being hit.

Zica's teeth chattered. "Who is the coward now?" asked Wanduska. The Red Squirrel made no reply, for at that moment they found themselves close to White Otter's wigwam, into which they glided like two shadows.

White Otter sat alone in his wigwam. His thoughts were evil ones, for he was planning to harm Little Indian. As if in answer to his wicked thoughts, Wanduska and Zica stood before him. A cruel gleam was in the eyes of the Blacksnake and the teeth of the crafty Red Squirrel gleamed in the dusk of the wigwam.

"Welcome, O my brothers!" cried White Otter.

"We have news for you, O red-skinned brother!" hissed Wanduska in a whisper.

"From the council, where we listened, we have come to bring you tidings," cried Zica.

"The three of us are more cunning than all the others put together," said White Otter after listening to their story. "What care we if Tuhmaja, the Bee, has a sting? Will that protect Little Indian from us? Are we afraid of Mastinca, or the kick of his hind foot? We do not fear bees and rabbits."

"You speak wisely," said Zica, but Wanduska said nothing. He was too wise to boast. Then White Otter turned to him, saying in a low voice, "I would teach the son of Big Chief something that he will not relish."

"Let us dig a pit beneath the trail, and then summon him to the forest to a council of the wild folk," said Wanduska. "No one then will be the wiser as to how the harm befell him."

"Yes, your plan is good and wisely have you spoken, O Wanduska!" cried White Otter. "Lead me with you to the forest and I will dig the pit into which shall fall Little Indian."

Silently the three plotters stole from the wigwam. It took the Blacksnake but a few moments to regain the depths of the great forest. The Squirrel was not far behind, but White Otter had to hurry to keep within sight of his two small comrades.

"Why do you run, and why so fast?" he asked angrily, coming up breathless to the spot where they stood waiting for him. "Did you think the Evil Spirits were in pursuit?"

"No," answered Wanduska shortly, "but the forest is a safer place than the wigwam of an Indian."

Zica was high in the treetop, chattering away angrily.

"Did you wish to have us on either side of you, O brave White Otter?" he asked sarcastically.

"Silence!" he cried. "'Tis no time for bandying words. Let us get to work at once."

It was long into the night before the pit was dug, and the three were weary and sleepy.

"You arrange to summon Little Indian," said White Otter to Wanduska, as the three separated until the next day.

CHAPTER XXII

LITTLE INDIAN IS A PRISONER

WANDUSKA, the Snake, was too wise to go direct to Little Indian for he knew that this would make the young brave suspicious. So he hid himself near the trail and waited until such time as Little Indian would pass that way. This made White Otter impatient and he chaffed Wanduska, saying, "Do you fear to go to his wigwam?"

"No, O Little Boaster," retorted Wanduska, "but would you have me put him on his guard? He will wonder why I come to summon him to the forest. Then, if he slip into the pit he will know the reason. Have patience!"

Early one morning Little Indian went up the trail through the forest. The Red Squirrel who was on the look-out, darted off to inform Wanduska. The latter was lying in wait near the great pit which had been carefully covered over with branches and moss.

"Wanduska! Wanduska!" called Zica. "He is coming! He is coming!"

"Softly, softly, Chatterbox!" replied Wanduska. "Tate Wiyohpeyata will carry your words to him."

"The West Wind is busy on the prairie," replied Zica. "He is not listening!"

At that moment the soft footfall of moccasins came to their ears. Zica hid in a hollow in the tree and Wanduska crept into his hole.

Slowly up the trail came Little Indian, unconscious of the danger that lay

before him, for the pit had been covered so cleverly with branches, moss and leaves as to leave no trace of the great hollow underneath. Zica peered out expectantly, but Wanduska waited for the sound of breaking branches. Down went Little Indian with a crash to the bottom of the great pit. He gave no outcry as he felt the earth give way, but closed his eyes to avoid the flying dirt. Luckily he landed on his feet and as he looked up he saw Zica bending over the edge.

"Zica, Zica!" he shouted, but no answer came, for the cruel Zica has disappeared.

Wanduska came out from his hiding place as the Red Squirrel darted away. "Foolish one to let him see you!" he hissed angrily. "You are as curious as a woman!"

"Perhaps he did not see me," replied Zica.

"Then why did he call your name?" asked the Blacksnake.

The Red Squirrel looked foolish. "Do not flatter yourself that you escaped his quick eye," continued Wanduska. "He that flatters himself flatters a fool!"

CHAPTER XXIII

HIS FRIENDS PLAN HIS ESCAPE

THE news of Little Indian's danger soon spread through the forest. Another Council was called, at which all the birds and animals were present.

"Alas!" cried Tamdoska, the Deer, who had once given him a rattle as a token of swiftness, "of what use is swiftness to him who is imprisoned in a pit!"

Then Huya, the Eagle, flapped his great wings and cried, "Of what use are the feathers I gave him to insure great prowess in war?"

"And the shoulder belt I gave him," cried Tatanka, the Buffalo Bull, who had come to the Council from the great

prairie, "is for the warpath and not for a prison."

"He cannot blow on the war-whistle," said Pehan, the Whooping Crane, "for no one will hear him from the depths of the earth."

And so it went, every animal deploring the fact that he had not given Little Indian something which would enable him to escape from the pit.

At length the Great Beaver, white with the snows of many winters, who had come a great distance from his island in the river, arose and said:

"Brothers, 'tis no time to lament; the hour has come when we must rescue our red-skinned brother."

In the meantime Little Indian had tried several times to climb up the side of the pit but without success. The tribe seldom used the old trail, for the warriors hunted on the prairie now that

the buffalo and antelope were plentiful. He would probably be missed from the camp and a search made for him, but it was very doubtful if anyone would think of coming that way.

"Where is my faithful Hinakaja?" he asked himself.

As if in answer to his question, the Owl fluttered down and alighted on his shoulder.

"O Little Indian," he cried "everywhere have I looked for you but nowhere could I find you."

"Evil has befallen me," replied Little Indian. "I must die."

"Trust to me. Once before did I bring you aid. Shall I not succeed a second time?" replied Hinakaja, and he flew away, straight for the Council, arriving just as the Great Beaver finished speaking.

"But how shall we save him?" asked

the animals. "The ways of men are unlike ours. If the time has come, show us how."

"Follow me!" replied the Owl. "I have work for the strongest of you. There is no time to lose for our red-skinned brother is faint and weary."

The animals followed the Owl until they came to an old tree about whose trunk and limbs clung a strong vine. Away to the topmost branches stretched the supple runners.

"We must tear off the vine from the tree," cried Hinakaja.

The Bear with his strong claws unwound the vine, and the Buffalo dug up the roots with his horns. Then all the animals laid hold and pulled until the vine lay upon the ground.

"Let us hasten with it," cried Hinakaja.

The Deer and the Buffalo picked up

the vine with their horns and started off, followed by all the birds and animals of the forest.

Wanduska and Zica heard them coming.

"What is that great noise, like tearing branches?" cried the Blacksnake.

"I see nothing," replied the Red Squirrel from his branch, chattering loudly as he looked anxiously through the rustling leaves.

"The earth is shaking," cried the Blacksnake. "I am filled with fear."

Of a sudden the Red Squirrel ceased his chatter and ran swiftly down the tree. "The animals are coming! The animals are coming to Little Indian's rescue!" he cried.

Wanduska glided away, followed by the Red Squirrel. When they had gone some distance they stopped and looked at each other. "Who told them

where Little Indian is imprisoned?" asked Wanduska suspiciously. "Did you chatter in your dreams?"

"Surely not!" replied Zica.

"What will White Otter say when he discovers that the animals are bent on rescuing Little Indian?" continued the Blacksnake. "I must creep away and tell him."

"I will remain here," replied Zica, "I dare not incur the wrath of the animals. They will surely see me but you glide so silently among the leaves and grasses that none may hear."

CHAPTER XXIV

LITTLE INDIAN MEETS WHITE OTTER

BROTHERS of the plain and forest," cried Little Indian, "my heart is filled with gladness. You have rescued me from my wicked enemies."

Then the Great Beaver replied:

"Hasten, O my red-skinned brother, to your lodge among your people, for Blue Water waits with longing for the sight of her beloved!"

Little Indian hastily bent his footsteps toward his own camp, where he was met by the warriors who had been searching for him.

"Mother," cried Little Indian, "'twas Hinakaja who brought me aid. He it was who summoned all the Forest

Folk to aid me. Even from the smiling prairie came the buffalo to help me."

"Yes, my son," she answered simply, "the Great Spirit heard your prayer and he sent his earth-born creatures so that you might heed his mercy and obey the law forever."

Little Indian was silent for some time. Then he rose and went over to where his aged grandmother sat making a pair of moccasins. "Grandmother, I would find the coward who dug the pit beneath the forest trail."

For answer she laid down her work and pointed towards the lodge of White Otter.

Little Indian slowly walked over to the lodge of his enemy. There was no one within, so he did not enter. Of a sudden his eyes noticed the print of moccasins leading from the lodge. Following them carefully, for here and

there where the earth was hard and rocky he would lose the trail, he entered the forest. At last the moccasin prints stopped beside the great pit.

"Coward!" hissed Little Indian. "Twice now have you sought my life and twice have you been foiled, O treacherous White Otter!"

He did not see the crafty form of the Blacksnake between the slender grasses nor the hostile eyes of the Squirrel in the treetop. Turning his face towards the prairie, he left the trail and the forest far behind him.

"Must I have a traitor forever in my path?" he asked himself. "Why does he not fight me in the open?"

As if in answer to the question a form arose suddenly from the tall grass and White Otter stood before him.

"What causes the frown on my

brother's brow?" he asked in a mocking voice.

For a moment Little Indian made no reply. Then he answered in a low voice: "Treacherous one! I challenge you to combat."

"I challenge you to combat," repeated Little Indian; still White Otter made no reply. "Does my enemy fear to fight in the open? He is brave to dig a pit to entrap a warrior."

With a yell of rage, White Otter sprang upon him. Though taller and heavier, he was not as good a wrestler as Little Indian, but weight and strength count for much, and the suddenness of the attack bore Little Indian to the earth. Over and over they rolled on the prairie grass, the superior weight of White Otter at first giving him the advantage. Soon, however, the knowledge and agility of Little Indian

began to tell. Recovering from the suddenness of the attack, he gained a deadly hold on his adversary and slowly but surely pressed him to the earth.

"You have conquered!" whispered White Otter.

Little Indian arose. "I will not slay you for you are one of my own tribe. Yet I warn you the next time I will show no mercy."

No one in the camp would have been the wiser as to what was going on, had not Blue Water, happening to look across the prairie, seen her son borne to the earth by the cowardly attack of White Otter. Summoning Big Chief and a number of warriors, she ran swiftly to the scene of combat.

Little Indian needed no help, however. He had his enemy already beaten. When Big Chief was informed by the

old grandmother how she had seen White Otter sneak off to the forest to dig the pit, he asked Little Indian:

"Is all this true?"

"Yes," he replied, "it is true."

"He shall be driven from the tribe," said Big Chief. "An outcast shall he be. The tribe of Big Chief is composed of warriors—it has no use for such as White Otter. Go!" he commanded, turning to the cowardly Indian. "Never let your shadow fall again across my wigwam. Forever be an outcast. I have spoken!"

In the sequel to this book, "STAR BOY," will be related the adventures of Little Indian's son.

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